Surára
Pakidái

/85 cont./

9. Meals and Eating Habits

244
262 In the morning the Surára and Pakidái eat very little, usually only one or two bananas or tubers roasted in the hot ashes. I often found that men and women set out to hunt or gather without having eaten anything. If they come across wild fruits on their wanderings, however, they help themselves generously. Small, light meals in the form of banana soup, roasted or steamed bananas, pupunha fruit, sweet potatoes, etc. are eaten at noon. Sometimes there are some leftovers from the meat of the day before. The main meal of the day does not take place until after sundown, by the light of the blazing fire. For at this time the whole family is usually assembled again, and the hunting booty which the man perhaps brought home in the afternoon or the products of the gathering by the women have been prepared. Everywhere one sees the men squatting beside the fire and waiting for food, which includes larger or smaller pieces of meat supplemented by vegetable fare. In front of them the women (824) have spread out a few palm leaves as an underlayer for the food. The men eat first, and they also get the best pieces of meat. When they are satisfied, the women and children may start eating. Nothing is drunk during the meal, but afterwards a palm-fruit or honey drink is enjoyed.

264 Eating is done with the hands. In one hand the Indian holds a piece of roasted or boiled meat and in the other a roasted banana, a manioc flat-cake, or something similar. Intermittently one reaches into the pot and takes out another piece or cuts it off from (415) the wooden spit or roasting rack. Soups are drunk out of gourd bowls or calabashes, just like the palm-fruit and honey drinks.

If the hunters' bag was particularly good, one may observe (251) many Indians, men, women, and children, eating all night long, for meat is preserved only before festivals. In connection with this the individual members of the family lie comfortably in their hammocks, converse, sleep a little at intervals, then fetch themselves another piece of meat from the roasting spit or rack. It is (267) astonishing what quantities they consume during such a night. On the other hand, they are also easily able to fast for a long period of time.

Surára Pakidái

/102 cont./

755 faith and to what extent he is faking" (506). The fact that
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506. Baldus, 1931, p. 142.

even in modern medicine great importance is now attributed to the suggestive influence of the physician on his patients is shown in the following statements by Hans Grimm: "If we emphasize that the suggestive influence of the physician's personality on the patient is often of decisive influence (Jores), if we use hypnosis, the so-called 'autogenous training,' etc., we are, in our own way, returning to what was already playing a role in shamanistic techniques" (507).

507. Grimm, 1958/59, p. 357.

769 3. Religious Festivals

Every year, toward the end of the dry season, March-April, the Surára and Pakidái jointly celebrate the festival in memory of the dead -- patapáanomão -- (508). It always takes

[192]

508. This contains the word for corpse, the male or female dead person -- anomão.

place in the large, open Surára maloka Jarací (see pp. 25 ff.). Occasionally a few families of friendly tribes (Xiriána, Pusheweteri, Aramamesteri, etc.) also take part. The
[114] patapáanomão festival, which I witnessed in all its phases, /103/ was held during the period from the fourth to the sixth of
769 April, 1956. But even before that there were great preparations
• 25 for this purpose. The men set out on a joint hunting expedition in order to kill as many tapirs as possible, the meat of which was then roasted on roasting racks over an even fire, not too hot, until it was black and bone-hard, so that it could be kept for a

Surára
Pakidái

/103 cont./

769 25 [462] few days. This roasting belongs to the men's sphere of duties, as does the harvesting of pupunha fruits. The latter are then made into a drink by the women. Moreover, they fetched from the plantings large quantities of bananas which were put in the sun so that they could ripen, and, finally, it should be mentioned that among all the families several stacks of manioc flat-cakes were piled up little by little.

769 535 [206] On the evening of April fourth, toward 9:00, the actual festival began. Five men and five boys, who wore cotton belts over their hip cords, danced, after the former had first blown snuff-powder into each other's noses, one behind the other (two steps forward and one back, during which the more marked lifting of the knees with a slight turning outward of the legs is to be noted), on a circular path in the open circle of the maloka, and, to be sure, counterclockwise (509a). The first two men

509a. In all the dances that go around the periphery of a circle the participants dance counterclockwise.

each held two arrows in the right hand, and the rest, as well as [533] all the boys, had their hands crossed behind their heads. Occasionally one man would sing in a beautiful, full bass voice, and the others would then join in chorus. The songs were very melodious and furnished the rhythm for the dance steps (509b).

[534] 509b. The Surára and Pakidái accompany dances in part with songs, for musical instruments are unknown to them.

[296] Toward 10:00 more men, in part with arrows, in part without, and boys (all without arrows) joined the dancers, and at 11:30 all the men and boys, with the exception of the Surára chief, were gathered in the center of the maloka courtyard, where, from a large clay plate filled with snuff-powder that had been placed here along with several snuff tubes, they blew huge quantities into each other's noses. Then they sat down in a

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

Barbasco is a kind of liana which can grow to impressive dimensions—attaining a stem up to eight inches thick. The Indians cut it in the forest and collect a large pile together at a convenient place for pressing. Their press is made from one of those dead trunks of hardwood which are found in such quantity in the forest and some wooden clubs specially cut for the purpose. The liana stems are pounded and then done up into bundles so that they can be easily taken to the place to be fished, which may be some way off. Here they are immersed several times in the river, releasing a milky juice which gives the water a whitish opalescence. The juice of the liana reduces the air content of the water through oxidization, and the fish very soon come floating up to the surface—asphyxiated but not poisoned.

This procedure is a very common one among the Indians, whose fishing follows a two-year cycle—this being the minimum time needed for each stretch of water to become repopulated after the use of barbasco. It goes without saying that this extract of liana loses its efficacy in anything bigger than a small stream. Nevertheless, in times of scarcity the Indians will attempt to fish medium-sized rivers in this way, banding together to collect huge quantities of liana. The fish taken are then smoked and wrapped in banana leaves, after which they will keep for months.

Anai and his men had to go far afield with their barbasco before they found a suitable place. The probability was that the Shirianas had already been at work, unknown to anyone, near the source of the Canaracuni. We therefore left him to it after all, and returned to camp early one morning, just in time to meet the plane that was circling the field.

VI

On Sunday, the 24th June, a big plane came into sight over the rim of the Sarisariñama mountains—towards the east where they merge into the Sororoc range. It swooped down to about three hundred feet and then went off without giving any signal. The excitement among the Indians on the spot—Luis Antonio was one of them and he explained the nature of the machine to his kinsfolk—was doomed to disappointment. And time and again this story of the aeroplane continued to arouse our hopes, only to dampen them once more.

A week later it appeared, at the same time—so suddenly and unexpectedly

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

him outside the range of the magic influence which had reduced him to such a hideous condition. But evidently they had only escaped the Samatari magic to fall straight into another, which was too much for the sick child. He died, sacrificed in a duel between two magic powers.

VI

The great 'provisioning-march' of the Samatari now began. We went along with them. We were prisoners, we were guests, we were tolerated visitors—a bit of everything. The main body, with the women and children, led the way along a track that was years old and had been opened up again the day before by the younger members of the tribe, who possessed the one metal weapon used by the Samatari: a piece of a knife-blade stuck into a stick and firmly bound with bark soaked in vegetable gum. What story could this scrap of steel have told when it finally reached the headwaters of the Araçoua!

The track was by no means straight, but for all its meanderings led vaguely towards the south-east. It lay for the most part through the dense thickets of fruit-bearing trees, which probably harboured other sorts of foodstuffs of which we knew nothing. The main body arrived to find that the young men had already picked nuts and fruit of all kinds and made piles of them at the foot of the trees. All the women had to do was take them up.

When meat of any sort is found and killed on these occasions, a couple of youngsters stay behind with it. They sling a hammock and light a fire and watch while it is slowly smoking on the spit. When the women come up, they pull off pieces of the flesh, put them into the rough hampers they carry on their shoulders and go on with the march, their babies jogging up and down on their backs, tied there with a strap made of bark. Some, like peripatetic vestal virgins, take fire with them, in the form of glowing brands, blowing on them as they go along lest the embers should grow cold. Thus the march of the Samatari leaves a trail of nutshells, rinds, ash, and little bits of charcoal. It suggests not so much an ordinary nomadic people on the move but rather a very special tribe composed of itinerant cooks.

With evening, or strictly speaking some time before the end of the afternoon, we found ourselves in a vast clearing where all the small plants, shrubs, bushes and grass had been cut away and swept and raked aside. All round this

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

and brought to us already cooked, in a wrapping of some appropriate green stuff—a dish beyond compare. At times there was so much meat (cooked and eaten without salt or spices) that we willingly turned to fruit again. There was no lack of that either.

When a tapir or a number of peccaries have been killed and there is too much meat to be eaten up at once, the Samatari smoke it on a hurdle supported by four stakes driven into the ground. A fire is lit underneath and kept going all night—to the accompaniment of the medicine-man's ceaseless chanting. In the morning the pieces of meat, looking completely charred, are wrapped in wild banana leaves and entrusted for transport to some little woman who hoists them up along with the babies on her back.

I have also seen a sloth being smoked. No gentler animal exists in the world. She moves at a speed which never exceeds a few yards a day, and lives hanging on the trees with her young ones clinging to the hairs of her back. They captured one alive, and with the machete chopped off the three nails of its hands and feet, to make scrapers and 'bodkins' for various uses. Deprived of her only means of defence, the sloth kept moving slowly along, with a resigned, human expression which quickly won our sympathy. But not the Samatari's. To them, a sloth is an excellent target for archery practice, because it will remain in the same position—clasping a pole, for instance, without moving—just the sort of thing you want for a target. The arrows whistled past the sloth's wet nose, but its face showed no change of expression; then some struck it, but not in a vital part, and its fur reddened with blood. The arrows did not penetrate deeply because they were only practice ones, with worn tips. Had I had a gun I would have shot it, for there was such a look of gentle reproof in the little animal's eyes that it became unendurable. But the gun was a long way off, and our five remaining cartridges had been the subject of so much calculation, that perhaps after all I wouldn't have ventured to expend one on this four-legged Saint Sebastian. Soon, however, too many arrows had struck, and before the youngsters could get it to play with and drag it about in the dust, still alive, I asked for the machete. Laughing, in order to evade Samatari susceptibilities, I struck it one hard blow on the head which sent it straight to the smoking-tray.

We now had a definite plan laid and were spreading propaganda to make it possible, Uaremu and the Guayca Indians being our agents. We had now made the descent of the entire Arecoa and part of the Uraricoera, and before reaching

/449/

Preparation of Food

251 To keep meat from spoiling, it is first dried directly over the fire. Then it is kept on a rack over the fire, perhaps for several hours, but frequently all night. After this, it is placed a bit farther from the fire, but where the air will keep it dry, although not necessarily warm. I have seen meat kept for some ten days in this way, and doubtless it would have lasted longer had it not been eaten.

252 Meat preserved in this way is still regarded as raw and must be cooked in a pot before being eaten.

Small animals are cleaned, washed, and then boiled whole in a pot. If the animal is large, it is cut up into pieces small enough to fit into the pot. The custom of leaving the skin and [174] hair on them while they cook is perhaps a survival from the time when they did not have knives for skinning them. A string or piece of bark is tied to each piece of meat in order to be able to take it out of the pot to turn it. From time to time they take the meat out in order to prick it many times with a stick so that it will cook more quickly.

When it is finally ready, the head of the family, or the owner of the meat, shares it or divides it into portions which he distributes among his relatives or friendly families.

462 The task of cooking the meat is man's work. He is the 252 owner of the pot, does the hunting, looks for the firewood, and divides and distributes the cooked meat. (Sometimes he sends a boy to deliver the meat to some family on the other side of the circle of dwellings.)

313 The gathering of firewood for cooking food other than meat 462 and for keeping the family warm at night is woman's work. For [412] this reason the women use the ax much more than the men do.

252 Green platanos are generally peeled and placed directly over the embers, turned a few times, and /450/ taken off when they are found ready to eat. Or they may be placed on a live fire to be cooked, but without being peeled, in order that they may not be blackened. If it is necessary to cook a large quantity of green platanos quickly, they are peeled and boiled in a pot.

/451 cont./

251 The Gualka /Waica/ do not keep reserves of food. All of their foods are cooked fresh or at least within a period of two weeks from the time they are ready. Therefore, in case their conucos have a scarcity of produce, they must go to live in the forest, gathering seeds, fruits, and roots, and devoting more time than usual to hunting and fishing. When another settlement has an abundance of food in a time of scarcity, it would be very fortunate to be able to live completely from this settlement instead of having to subsist from the forest.

[828]

Consumption of Food

263 No salt is consumed as such, that is, as salt properly speaking. They eat wood ashes, especially the ashes of a tree called "kololi." The ashes may be eaten as they are or with hot water poured over them to obtain a tasty liquid. To this liquid, called "ubu," is added strong peppers. Platanos and other foods are dipped in the resulting sauce to flavor and ingest them.

[824]

261 Clay is also dried and eaten, especially the clay from certain nests of insects.

[842] No child may be weaned until it has learned to eat the said ashes and clay.

Earth and clean dust are also eaten. They are considered clean if they are taken from a place where a fire has recently burned, from a river bed, or from a bare spot or bank of sand which the sun has been able to purify.

264 Their hours for eating are as follows: Breakfast is taken shortly after sunrise, and the second turn when they come back from work in their "conucos," generally at some time near midday. They eat again near /452/ sunset. This schedule varies, being adjusted for hunting trips, moving from the settlement, etc. They eat quite a lot between meals, especially wild fruits and bananas and ripe platanos.

/469 cont./

513 352 The third essential thing is the hammock. The Guaika must have a hammock in order to sleep at night. In his dwelling he has a cotton hammock or a hammock made of vines split longitudinally. On a hunting trip he may travel with his hammock made out of cords of vine or without carrying any. In this latter case, each night he will make a temporary hammock /470/ out of cords of bark, and, in case he stays in the same general area, he will use it for several nights. Then, in order to travel light, he will abandon this hammock of cords of bark and will go to his home, where his good hammock awaits him.

262 594 [251] The supply of food which the Guaika have is generally good and apparently quite nutritious. From time to time there is a shortage, and they do not accumulate reserves. Shortages are generally not too serious, for which reason they can usually bear the period of privation, subsisting from a neighboring settlement, which will be paid back for the visit when in its turn bad times come to it.

261 726 The complete loss of a "conuco" as a result of being constantly driven out of the area by an enemy is a quite serious matter. We observed a settlement (that of Bichaasatedi) subsisting with great difficulty for a year until its new "conuco" began to produce, after having been driven out of their former area by a hostile group (the one from Liakoatedi).

352 The Guaika do not make seats, but they rarely sit on the ground if they can avoid it. Generally they sit in a hammock or on a piece of firewood.

512 On an ordinary day the Guaika awake with the dawn. The wife prepares the roasted platanos for the whole family. Around 7:30 or 8:00 the majority of the inhabitants of the settlement go to work in the "conuco." Those who remain in the settlement in general rest the entire morning. Some few women gather in a party and go out to make firewood out of a dead tree, recently fallen. Those who work in the conuco begin to come back at noon. On the way to the settlement they bathe in the stream. After a brief rest each person roasts a few [276] platanos for his lunch. Then, around 2:00 in the afternoon, the "yopo" is prepared, and it is blown up the noses of many of the

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

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Clay pots and banana (plantain) peelings; preparations for a feast (described in Chapter 4). Note quantities of plantains hanging up and on the ground.

Mama-teri was shooting at a wooden chimney (in hammock) in a monk raid. They left on the armed raid the next day (described in Chapter 5).

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222 262 we had each accumulated a half bushel or so, we would then proceed to eat them. In general, it takes a lot of work to get filled up on palm fruits.

The Yąnomamö also collect wild honey in considerable quantities. Nothing excites them more than locating a dead tree in which a swarm of bees has built a nest. They will halt everything and, if need be, spend the entire day chopping the tree down [123] to get at the honey. When I began my fieldwork I hired about a dozen men to cut trees for me so that I could build a mud hut. They would be gone all day and return with just a few poles, demanding a full day's pay for their efforts. I decided to accompany them one day to see what they were up to. We spent the entire day wandering through the jungle, eyes glued to the tree tops above. Each time I spotted a suitable tree, they talked me out of cutting it down because "it would rot" or "it is too far away from the river." By mid-afternoon we had not cut a single tree, but had walked over a large area of jungle. Finally, one of the men shouted for the rest of us to come. All the men descended on the large, dead tree he had located, and set about chopping it down with the axes I had provided. It took about an hour to get it down. They then spent another hour chopping holes along the length of the tree trunk to get at the honey inside. When it was exposed, they gleefully tore the combs out, dunked them into the amber liquid, and gorged themselves on the larvae-filled combs. After they had eaten their fill of this, they collected a large pile of leaves and made a crude bowl. Then they stuck handfuls of leaves into the honey and squeezed them out into the leaf bowl. When they had gotten all the honey they could reach, they scoured the nest with leaves and licked them off after each plunge [123] of the hand into the bowels of the trunk. They borrowed the aluminum kettle I had brought along and used to cook our lunch in. As we were some distance from the river [292] and they were impatient, one of them filled the kettle with muddy water he found in a swamp a short distance away. Some of the honey from the bowl was poured into the kettle, along with dead adult bees, twigs, leaves, dirt, and several dozen larvae. They passed this around among themselves, each man drinking about a quart or so of the mead after blowing the debris off the surface in order to expose the water. The remainder [251] of the honey was wrapped up in its leaf bowl, tightly bound with vines, and carried back [123] to the village. On the way back to the canoe we cut a few light trees for my mud hut. They had gotten what they were looking for all day, and I managed to get a few logs. They demanded a full day's pay when we reached home. Thereafter, I paid them by the log rather than by the day.

222 231 262 Finally, several varieties of insects are collected. Perhaps the most desirable food in this category is the grub of an insect that lays its eggs in the decaying pith of dead palm trees. The Yąnomamö come very close to practicing "animal domestication" in their techniques of exploiting this food. They deliberately cut the palm tree down in order to provide fodder for the insect. When they cut the tree, they also eat the heart of the palm, a very delicious, crunchy vegetable that slightly resembles the taste of celery hearts. One palm we cut yielded an edible heart of about 30 pounds. After the pith has been allowed to decay for several months, it contains numerous large, fat, white grubs. The pith is dug out of the tree with sticks, broken open by hand, and the grubs extracted. Each grub is bitten behind his squirming head, and the head and intestines removed simply by pulling the body away from the teeth. If a grub gets damaged in the process of extracting it, the parts are eaten raw on the spot. A fair-sized palm tree will yield three or four pounds of grubs, some of them as large as a mouse. The grubs

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

Fig. 2-6. Rerohamŭ climbing a rasha *tree to collect the palm fruit. The tree has many sharp spines on it, and the Yąnomamŭ use an ingenious device made of crossed poles to climb the tree. The climber stands on one pair of poles and lifts the other pair up the tree. Then he climbs to the upper pair and lifts the bottom pair up. In this way the tree is slowly ascended, and no thorns get stuck in the body.*

The grubs

are wrapped in small packages of leaves and placed in the hot coals to roast. They render down in the heat, yielding some liquid fat, which is licked off the leaves, and a soft, white body. I could never bring myself around to eat one, but an experienced missionary told me they tasted very much like bacon. But then I suppose that anything cooked in a smoky fire tastes like bacon.

The discarded seeds of palm fruits also get infected with much smaller grubs. The Yąnomamŏ break the hard seeds open with a rock, extract the grub, and prepare it in the above manner.

Some species of caterpillar are also eaten. They are not cleaned before cooking; the squirming insects are simply wrapped in leaves and thrown into the coals to roast.

11: Chagnon F-5 (1964-1983) 1988 SQ18 Tmoumm SQ18

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Fig. 3-3. Arisuari, Kaplawai's son, being fondled by his mother's brother. This is a very intimate kinship relationship in Yanomamö society.

men built his own section of the village, but in such a way that the roofs coincided and could be attached by simply extending the thatching. When completed, the village looked like a continuous, oval-shaped lean-to because of the way in which the roofs of the discrete houses were attached. Each house, however, is owned by the family that built it. Sharariwi, Kaobawi's youngest brother, helped build Kaobawi's house and shares it with him. He also shares Koamashima, Kaobawi's younger wife. Kaobawi's older wife, Bahimi, hangs her hammock adjacent to Kaobawi's most of the time, but when there are visitors and the village is crowded, she ties her hammock under his in order to be able to tend the fire during the night. Ariwari still sleeps with his mother, but will get his own hammock soon: He is nearly four years old. His parents are afraid he will fall into the fire at night and get burned, since he is still a little too young to sleep alone.[21]

Daily activities begin early in a Yanomamö village. One can hear people chatting lazily and children crying long before it is light enough to see. Most people are waked by the cold and build up the fire just before daybreak. They usually go back to sleep, but many of them visit and talk about their plans for the day.

The entrances are all covered with dry brush so that any movement of people through them is heard all over the village. There is always a procession of people leaving the village at dawn to relieve themselves in the nearby garden, and the noise they make going in and out of the village usually awakens the others.

The village is very smoky at this time of day, since the newly stoked campfires smoulder before they leap into flames. The air is usually very still and chilly, and the ground is damp from the dew. The smoke is pleasant and seems to drive away the coolness.

Clandestine sexual liasons usually take place at this time of day, having been arranged on the previous evening. The lovers leave the village on the pretext of going to the bathroom and meet at some predetermined location. They return to the village by opposite routes.

This is also the time of day when raiders strike, so people must be cautious when they leave the village at dawn. If there is some reason to suspect raiders, they do not leave the confines of the upright log palisade that surrounds the village. They wait instead until full light and leave the village in armed groups.

By the time it is light enough to see, everybody has started preparing breakfast. This consists largely of roasted green plantains, easily prepared and steaming hot. If the family has any meat, it is taken down and shared, the children getting the best portions. Leftover meat is hung over the fire by a vine to keep the vermin off it and to preserve it.

If any of the men have made plans to hunt that day, they leave the village before it is light. Wild turkeys can be easily taken at this time of day because they roost in conspicuous places. During the dry season the *Aashimo* (a kind of grouse) sing before dark and can be readily located. If any were heard the night before, the men leave at dawn to stalk them.

Tobacco chewing starts as soon as people begin stirring. Those who have fresh

[21] A child fell into a fire and burned to death in 1966—the mother had placed her hammock too close to the fire in order to keep warm, and the baby slipped from her arms while she slept. Bahimi's mother also sleeps in Kaobawi's house, but he does not have to avoid her because she is an old woman.

undertake it if it meant getting rid of their first group of visitors, who, by this time, had spent nearly a week eating Kaobawë's produce.

On the morning of the feast three large pieces of bark from the *arapuri* tree were cut and brought to the village. These were made into troughs to contain the boiled, ripe plantain soup. All day long Kaobawë's younger brothers, who had returned from the hunt the day before, labored at cooking the enormous quantity of ripe plantains, pouring each boiling containerful into the trough as it was prepared.[3]

The plantains that Kaobawë had hung in his *shabono* roof a week before were now ripe. The young men who were preparing the soup would cut the bunches of plantains from the roof, split each fruit with their thumb, throw the two halves of the flesh into a cooking pot, and toss the skins onto a pile. They worked at this task from early morning until late afternoon, in addition to boiling a nearly equal quantity of green plantains, which provided the green vegetable food that customarily accompanies the presentation of meat. Yąnomamö etiquette dictates that meat must be accompanied by vegetable food and vice versa.[4] It is an insult, for example, to offer someone meat without simultaneously offering a vegetable food with it. Peeling green plantains is a little more difficult than peeling ripe ones, which are very tough and brittle. The Yąnomamö solve this problem, like they solve so many others, by using their teeth. Each plantain is bitten along its length several times, cracking the peel, which in turn is removed with the fingernails and further application of the dentition. On this particular occasion, two young men peeled, with their thumbs, enough ripe plantains to make approximately 95 gallons of soup, and, with their teeth, a sufficiently large quantity of green plantains to fill a dozen large pack-baskets.

In the morning on the day of the feast, Kaobawë went to the center of the village clearing where all could see him and proceeded to pull weeds. The clearing has to look presentable to the visitors, as it functions as the dancing plaza. As noted before, since Yąnomamö headmen cannot directly order their followers to execute tasks such as these, they usually initiate them and hope that others will follow. By and by, a number of older men joined him, as well as a few women, and when a sufficient number of workers were pulling weeds and hauling them out, Kaobawë quietly retired to his hammock, from which he oversaw the food preparations and calculated the distribution of meat.

Excitement in the village grew conspicuously as the hours passed, and by noon there was a constant din of laughter and chatter, punctuated now and then with a shrill scream from some young man overcome with the thrill of the feast. Occasionally, the visitors would reply to the shouts, setting off a brief contest of screaming between hosts

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[3] Kaobawë's group has access to aluminum pots now and uses them extensively in food preparations. Most Yąnomamö groups still use crude clay pots, although these are being rapidly replaced by aluminum ware, which is traded inland to the more remote villages.

[4] The three vegetable foods considered to be suitable accompaniments for the meat preservation are: boiled green plantains, boiled *rasha* fruit, and cassava bread. A number of missionaries and a few scientific observers have identified the Yąnomamö feast strongly with the *rasha* fruit (Zerries 1955; de Buenaventura 1966). If it is to be identified with any food, it should be called the "plantain feast," but to identify the feast with a food that sometimes (*rasha*) or invariably (plantains) accompanies it is to overlook the sociopolitical causes of the feast. *Rasha* is so unnecessary to the feast that it was served at only two of six feasts I attended. In short, the Yąnomamö feast is a social and political event, not a harvest ceremony, and occurs independently of the abundance or availability of *rasha* fruit. *Rasha* fruit ripens in February, the peak of the dry season. It is only in the dry season that feasts can be held, because travel is difficult or impossible at other times of the year. The correlation of the ripening of *rasha* and feasting is rather more fortuitous than causal.